

Message Text

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SUBJECT: BIDS FOR BRACKISH WATER DESALINATION PLANTS:
PERFIDIOUS ALBION?

REF: NICOSIA 13, 240, 787; STATE 213478

1. PROJECT PRESENTLY IN LIMBO. OFFICIALLY, GOC IS STILL IN PROCESS OF EVALUATING THE LARGE NUMBER OF HIGHLY TECHNICAL AND COMPLEX BIDS RECEIVED. CONVERSATIONS WITH CONCERNED OFFICIALS INDICATE THAT THE ENTIRE PROJECT HAS BECOME THE SUBJECT OF EMBARRASSED RE-THINKING AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL SQUABBLING. IT APPEARS THAT AGRICULTURE MINISTRY (WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPT.) UNDER PRESSURE TO ACT ON DROUGHT EMERGENCY ISSUED TENDERS WITH MINIMUM OF PLANNING AND CONSULTATION. CURRENT GOC THINKING IS THAT RESEARCH PROJECT TO DETERMINE OPTIMUM BRACKISH WATER DESALINATION PROCESSES AND LOCATIONS SHOULD HAVE PRECEDED ISSUANCE TENDERS. THIS SHIFT REPRESENTS BUREAUCRATIC VICTORY FOR PLANNING BUREAU.

2. IN RESPONSE TO SPRING 1973 GOC REQUEST FOR DROUGHTRELIEF ASSISTANCE, BRITISH GOVT HAS OFFERED TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR BRACKISH WATER DE-

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SALINATIN RESEARCH PROJECT. GOC HAS ACCEPTED OFFER.

ACCORDING UK HICOM OFFICER, BRITISH GOVT GIFT CONSISTS OF ONE MOBILE BRACKISH WATER DESALINATION RESEARCH UNIT WITH A 37,000 GALLON PER DAY CAPACITY (8 UNITS TENDERED FOR RANGE FROM 10,000 TO 200,000 GPD CAPACITY). RESEARCH UNIT, SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY IN JANUARY, CAN DESALT ON EITHER REVERSE OSMOSIS OR ELECTRO DIALYSIS PROCESS AND CAN BE MOVED TO DIFFERENT BORE HOLES. BRITISH ALSO PROVIDING CONSULTANT TO WORK WITH WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPT ON PROJECT.

3. GOC OFFICIALS NOW STATE THAT WHEN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT COMPLETED, TENDERS WILL BE REDRAFTED AND THOSE FIRMS WHICH HAVE ALREADY TENDERED WILL BE ASKED TO RESUBMIT THEIR BIDS.

4. ALLEGATION THAT BRITISH MADE AID OFFER ON UNDERSTANDING THAT BRITISH FIRMS WOULD GET THE CONTRACTS ON THE TENDERED FOR UNITS IS BASED ON SIMPLISTIC MARKET-PLACE RUMOR. AID AND TRADE ARE CERTAINLY NOT UNRELATED IN CYPRUS AND BRITISH RESEARCH PROJECT MAY WELL LEAD TO GOC PREFERENCE FOR BRITISH EQUIPMENT AND TAILORING OF FUTURE TENDER SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT. CERTAINLY, UK COMMERCIAL OFFICER HOPES IT WILL. NEVERTHELESS, GOC POLICY AND PRACTICE WOULD STILL REQUIRE INTERNATIONAL TENDERS FOR PURCHASES OF THIS SIZE AND IMPORTANCE. (INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT HOECHST OF GERMANY HAS OFFERED GOC FREE SAMPLE SMALL BRACKISH WATER UNIT WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE ACCEPTED.)

5. BRITISH, WEST GERMAN, ITALIAN, ISRAELI, JAPANESE AND U.S. FIRMS HAVE SUBMITTED TENDERS FOR THIS EQUIPMENT. U.S. FIRMS WHICH HAVE SUBMITTED BIDS INCLUDE: AJAX INTERNATIONAL, IONICS, MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT C., ENVIROGENICS SYSTEMS, BECHTEL, AQUA-CHEM, AND POLYMETRICS.

6. AGMINDIRGEN MICHAELIDES, PLANNING BUREAU DIRGEN ARISTIDOU, AND WATER DEVELOPMENT DEPT DIR KONTEATIS WILL BE IN WASHINGTON WEEK OF NOV 5 FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH IBRD ON FINANCING PAPHOS WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND POWER PLANT EXPANSION. DEPARTMENT AND FIRMS CONCERNED MAY WISH TO TAKE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT SUBJECT TENDER.

7. COMMENT: OUR GUESS IS THAT TENDER UNLIKELY TO BE RE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISSUED BEFORE SPRING 74. THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT GOOD WINTER RAINS (PROMISING RAINS HAVE ALREADY STARTED) WILL LEAD TO FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF PURCHASE. GRANT

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